

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 738

By Alexander

A RESOLUTION to recognize and congratulate the men's and women's cross country teams of Milligan University upon winning the 2021 NAIA Cross Country National Championships.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor those Tennessee students who, through their athletic prowess, have achieved the pinnacle of success and serve as exceptional ambassadors of this State; and

WHEREAS, the members of the men's and women's cross country teams of Milligan University have proven themselves to be the fiercest of competitors and, as such, deserving of the highest regard; and

WHEREAS, both of Milligan University's cross country teams achieved an extraordinary level of success during the 2021 season, as each team captured the 2021 National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Cross Country Championship; and

WHEREAS, Milligan University became only the third institution to capture both the NAIA Men's and Women's Cross Country National Championships when the men's and women's cross country squads won the first two NAIA team championships in the program's history at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Championship Course on November 19, 2021; and

WHEREAS, to succeed at cross country, one of the most demanding sports, one must have a diligent work ethic, tremendous physical endurance, speed, strength, and agility; these qualities are undoubtedly evinced by Milligan University's cross country teams; and

WHEREAS, the men's team posted a score of 115 points to beat out national runner-up St. Mary (Kansas), which finished with 175 points; Indiana Wesleyan took third with 186 points, while St. Francis (Illinois) grabbed fourth with 215 points. College of Idaho rounded out the top five with 222 points; and

WHEREAS, four runners on the Buffs' men's team placed in the top forty to earn All-American honors: Aaron Jones (11<sup>th</sup>), Nathan Baker (14<sup>th</sup>), Eli Cramer (20<sup>th</sup>), and Will Stockley (27<sup>th</sup>); and

WHEREAS, the women's team posted a score of 122 points, edging out St. Francis (Illinois) in second with 141 points; Cornerstone (Michigan) took third with 149 points, while Taylor (Indiana) came in fourth with 164 points. College of Idaho rounded out the top five teams with 183 points; and

WHEREAS, three members of the Buffs' women's team finished in the top eleven: Alyssa Bearzi, who claimed the individual title after crossing the finish line in 18 minutes, 14.9 seconds; Lemi Wutz, who finished fifth overall; and Avery DeWolf Burton, who placed eleventh; and

WHEREAS, this slate of exceptional athletes benefited greatly from the knowledgeable leadership, encouragement, and devotion of Head Coach Chris Layne, who, following the race, was named the 2021 NAIA Men's Cross Country Coach of the Year and the 2021 NAIA Women's Cross Country Coach of the Year; and

WHEREAS, the dedication, determination, work ethic, and talent of this group of young men and women not only made possible a championship cross country season but also surely bode well for their success in every future endeavor; and

WHEREAS, we find it appropriate to acknowledge and applaud the members of the Milligan University men's and women's cross country teams for their outstanding performance and commitment to excellence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and congratulate the men's and women's cross country teams of Milligan University upon winning the 2021 NAIA Cross Country National

Championships and extend to them our best wishes for continued success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.